

# **NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER'S CODE OF PRACTICE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The North American Nature Photographer's Association (NANPA) and the Nature Division of the Photographic Society of America (PSA), in order to help protect all nature subjects and the environment, has adopted this Code of Practice as a guideline for all photographers to follow.

## **GENERAL**

Always be considerate of your subjects, be they animal, vegetable or mineral. Killing or injuring any living thing is not a proper part of our nature photography.

Be courteous to your fellow photographer.

For the good name of nature photography, observe normal courtesies. Permission should be obtained instead of trespassing on land on which there is not customarily free access.

Be familiar with the life history and the geographic or geologic setting of your subject. The more complex the life form and rarer the species, the greater your knowledge, care and respect should be.

Abide by all requests of rangers and wardens in National and State Parks and wildlife refuges

## **BIRDS AND OTHER SMALL ANIMALS**

Try to observe birds and other small animals so they are unaware of your presence. Thus, you are provided an opportunity to learn their interesting everyday habits.

When photographing a nest, don't keep it unduly exposed to the sun, cold, rain or snow, which may cause death to the eggs or young and/or desertion by the parents. This protocol also applies to the burrows or dens of small animals, reptiles and lower life forms as well.

Instead of cutting off branches or grasses near a nest or den, tie the branches back or lay the grass down with rocks or sticks. Before tying back branches, provide temporary shade, if needed. When you have finished photographing, place everything back properly, the way you found it, as a protection for the inhabitants.

Generally, do not keep a blind set up on a nest or burrow if the parents do not return within a half hour--especially on extremely hot or cold days.

Do not frighten birds from a nest to get a picture of them returning. You may cause the eggs or young to die. The normal intervals on the nest will not be too long.

It is preferable not to take longer than 15 minutes to set up a blind at a nest or burrow. It will be that much longer before the parents return. It is better to set your blind up at the car and carry it in.

Do not approach a blind by car or foot if it is occupied. You may frighten the animal subject from the other photographer's spot and spoil his/her picture.

Beware of approaching a nest, den or burrow too closely. This could cause abandonment of the young by some parents, and expose the area to predation. Careful judgment is necessary.

Do not handle young birds or other small animals. Some parents may abandon them.

Human tracks to and from a nest, den or burrow should be very inconspicuous. As far as possible, the area should be restored to its natural state after you are through photographing.

Blinds should not be positioned along a regularly used approach line to the nest, den or burrow and should not be allowed to flap in the wind.

For cold-blooded animals and invertebrates, temporary removal from the wild to a studio or aquarium for photography should be undertaken with caution, as some states and countries have laws against this practice without a permit. Subsequent release in any case, should be to the original habitat as soon as possible.

## **BOTANY**

A competent photographer never needs to pick wildflowers. In many states and all National Parks and Monuments it is not only illegal to pick flowers, but a true nature photographer should be the first to protect them.

If rocks or logs or other objects natural to the area are brought in to provide scientifically correct, but a more photogenic background, these should be returned to their original place.

While "gardening" is often desirable to simplify the immediate environment, this should not include pulling up, cutting off or otherwise destroying other plants in the picture area. Knee- holes, heel or toe scuffing, etc. should be prevented.

Avoid trampling fragile habitats, especially grasslands, marshes and wildflower patches. Remember, damage to the habitat affects all species in the ecosystems.

## **INSECTS**

Insects or spiders, captured for photographic purposes should be released at the point of capture within a reasonably short time.

Day flying insects, particularly butterflies and wasps, are most suitably controlled by working in-a darkened room at night, focusing by means of a weak flash light.

Chilling is suitable for such insects as beetles and grasshoppers only. Butterflies, many moths and almost all insect larvae, may be irreparably damaged by such treatment.

Freezing should never be attempted. The photographer should not endanger the lives of the insects. Bear in mind that they also play a part in the balance of nature.

Photographing insects and arachnids in the field would probably tell a more accurate story.

## **TIDAL SUBJECTS**

Tide pool animals have a definite ecological niche. Animals that live on top of rocks, and those that live underneath, will die if rocks turned over for photographic purposes are not replaced the way they were found. All marine life moved for any purpose should be returned to its original location. Certain tide pool creatures such as Brittle Stars are extremely fragile. Handle them with great care.

Marine animals require large amounts of frequently replaced oxygen, and may die rather quickly if placed in aquaria without artificial oxygenation and temperature control.

## **NEWTs, SALAMANDERS AND OTHER AMPHIBIANS**

While this group of animals makes delightful aquaria subjects, they should not be held for more than a few hours while being photographed, unless they are provided with proper food, and kept in well-simulated nature conditions.

If chilling is used for partial control it should be used carefully and for brief periods only. This practice applies to all animal subjects.

## **REPTILES**

It is preferable that lizards and snakes be held for no more than very brief periods, since artificial feeding is usually not successful with a number of these species. If held over night for photography next morning, they should be given protection roughly equivalent to that which they would find for themselves in the wild.

Snakes should never be picked up by the neck alone as this may permanently injure their spinal column. Similarly, they should never be controlled by lifting them by their tail end.

## **GEOLOGY**

Pictographs and petroglyphs should never be altered for photographic reasons by applying any substance.

When photographing fragile cave formations or crystals, or similar material, do not move or break these features. Others may follow and want to see them. Remember, a damaged plant may well recover in a few days, but a damaged crystal or cave formation took tens of thousands of years to grow, and present geologic conditions may make repair impossible on any time scale. Delicate erosion features must also be left untouched. Let Nature do the rearranging.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

It is unethical to throw rocks at an animal to cause it to change position or area. Thoughtless conduct could force a creature to leave its accustomed surroundings because it finds the photographer an unbearable nuisance. If the animal in question is forced to move into territory occupied by another animal, friction is bound to arise. The dislodged animal may find unfavorable conditions in regard to food and water.